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Jupiter
November 12, 1962

MAC:

I gather from the attached that early removal of JUPITERs from Italy and Turkey is up again, at least with McNamara. Let me reiterate (based on my sense as to the political climate in the Mediterranean/Middle East area) that this could create one hell of a mess.

Granted that from a strictly military point of view these missiles are near irrelevant; even from a politico-psychological viewpoint their existence adds only marginally to the credibility of our posture. It is the act of removing these missiles prematurely which would create all the repercussions.

Our Cuba performance to date has greatly bucked up our allies, and increased their confidence we will act if vital US interests are threatened. But they are still not fully convinced that we will regard other situations than Cuba as involving the same need for action.

Early removal of JUPITERs would revive all their latent fears. Despite any demurrs, it would inevitably be viewed as connected with Cuba, and as a delayed sacrifice of the security interests of more distant allies in a bargain to remove a more immediate threat to the US itself.

Let me be specific. Turkey, as I've said repeatedly, is not the strongman of the Middle East; it's in the throes of a continuing domestic political crisis. Withdrawal of JUPITERs could precipitate a real crisis of confidence, unless we had previously developed and sold a credible alternative. There is still a residual fear of neutralism in Italy (far greater in the minds of many than in my own). Removal of IRBMs might be a precipitate here too. Nor is the Pakistani angle unimportant; the Paks are reportedly considering withdrawal from CENTO and SEATO. Removal of IRBMs from Turkey at this point might, or top of Pak bitterness over India, be just the catalyst to convince the Paks that these alliances mean nothing. Iran too is worth considering; the Shah's perennial nervousness over US backing could not be sharply heightened.

Nor are the likely repercussions confined to these countries. I am convinced that a withdrawal of JUPITERs (regardless of how we play it) would be widely regarded, and played up by the Soviets, as a retraction of US power. However wrong it may be, the history of European sensitivity on this point is painfully clear. Doubt as to US intentions is at the core of our NATO problems, and we have not swept it away by our recent actions.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, SEC. 3.4

Rev. S-17

NLK-8869
NARA Dato 10/5/81

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The impact on the Soviets is more speculative, but I can hardly envisage the Soviets regarding JUPITER removal now as anything other than a sign that we do place a different value on threats in Cuba and those to Europe. Khrushchev is a political animal; he doesn't regard soft missiles as military folly (or why would he have so many).

And I doubt that the Italian and Turkish JUPITERs add any significant element of provocativeness whatsoever to the US posture in Soviet eyes. The Soviet target is our entire overseas base structure, and degradation of confidence in our will to act. JUPITERs by themselves are just bargaining counters to them.

Of course we want eventually to remove these missiles but we must do so after we have laid the indispensable groundwork, not before.

In sum, I fear that in looking at the JUPITER question we may be far too rational and logical about a problem which is really high in subjective emotional content. McNamara knows the JUPITERs are of no military value. But the Turks, Italians, and others don't--and that's the whole point.



RWK

Attach. Memo Kitchen to A. John on
dtd 11/9/62 w/attach. Memo Tyler to
SecState, subj. Turkish & Italian
IRBMs

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